

**WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:**

1. A method for searching electronic documents, comprising:  
receiving a search expression including one or more search terms having one or more weight criteria, wherein the one or more weight criteria include a user designated score modifier;  
finding one or more candidate documents based on the search expression;  
calculating a score for each candidate document according to the one or more weight criteria; and  
preparing a list of the one or more candidate documents reflecting the calculated scores.
2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
sorting the one or more candidate documents according to the calculate scores.
3. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
presenting a subscore for each search term having a weight criterion.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more weight criteria are selected from a location of the one or more search terms, a format of the one or more search terms, and a frequency count of the one or more search terms.
5. The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more weight criteria require that the one or more search terms are located in a section selected from a header section, a caption section, an abstract section, a footnote section, a summary section, and a title section.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more weight criteria require that the one or more search terms have a different format than a common format of a paragraph containing the one or more search terms.
7. The method of claim 6, wherein the format is selected from bold, italic, color, font size and font type.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein the one or more weight criteria require that a search term be present in the candidate document at least a minimum number of times.
9. The method of claim 1, further comprising:  
    sorting the one or more candidate documents according to weight criteria.
10. A signal bearing medium, comprising a program which, when executed by a processor, performs an operation, comprising:  
    receiving a search expression including one or more search terms having one or more weight criteria, wherein the one or more weight criteria include a user designated score modifier;  
    finding one or more candidate documents based on the search expression;  
    calculating a score for each candidate document reflecting the one or more weight criteria; and  
    preparing a list of the one or more candidate documents reflecting the calculated scores.
11. The signal bearing medium of claim 10, wherein the program which, when executed by a processor, further performs the step of sorting the one or more candidate documents according to the calculate scores.
12. The signal bearing medium of claim 10, wherein the program which, when executed by a processor, further performs the step of presenting a subscore for each search term having a weight criterion.
13. The signal bearing medium of claim 10, wherein the one or more weight criteria are selected from a location of the one or more search terms, a format of the one or more search terms, and a frequency count of the one or more search terms.
14. The signal bearing medium of claim 10, wherein the one or more weight criteria require that the one or more search terms are located in a section selected from a header section, a caption section, an abstract section, a footnote section, a summary section, and a title section.

15. The signal bearing medium of claim 10, wherein the one or more weight criteria require that one or more search terms have a different format than a common format of the candidate document.

16. The signal bearing medium of claim 15, wherein the different format is selected from bold, italic, color, font size and font type.

17. The signal bearing medium of claim 15, wherein the one or more weight criteria require that a search term be present in the candidate document at least a minimum number of times.

18. A system for searching electronic documents, comprising:  
a memory containing a search engine; and  
a processor which, when configured with the search engine, performs an operation, comprising:  
receiving a search expression including one or more search terms having one or more weight criteria, wherein the one or more weight criteria include a user designated score modifier;  
finding one or more candidate documents based on the search expression;  
calculating a score for each candidate document reflecting the one or more weight criteria; and  
preparing a list of the one or more candidate documents reflecting the calculated scores.

19. The system of claim 18, wherein the search engine is further configured to perform the step of sorting the one or more candidate documents according to the calculate scores.

20. The system of claim 18, wherein the search engine is further configured to perform the step of presenting a subscore for each search term having a weight criterion.

21. The system of claim 18, wherein the one or more weight criteria are selected from a location of the one or more search terms, a format of the one or more search terms, and a frequency count of the one or more search terms.
22. The system of claim 18, wherein the one or more weight criteria require that one or more search terms have a different format than a common format of the candidate document.
23. The system of claim 22, wherein the different format is selected from bold, italic, color, font size and font type.
24. The system of claim 18, further comprising a database containing one or more candidate documents.
25. The system of claim 18, further comprising a network connection with a client computer from which the search expression is received.
26. A method for searching electronic documents, comprising:  
receiving a search expression including one or more search terms having one or more format criteria;  
finding one or more candidate documents based on the search expression; and  
preparing a list of the one or more candidate documents reflecting the calculated scores.
27. The method of claim 26, wherein the one or more format criteria require that the one or more search terms have a different format than a common format of a paragraph containing the one or more search terms.
28. The method of claim 26, wherein the one or more format criteria are selected from bold, italic, color, font size and font type.
29. The method of claim 26, further comprising:

calculating a score for each candidate document according to the one or more format criteria, wherein the one or more format criteria include a user designated score modifier utilized for score calculation of the one or more candidate documents.

30. The method of claim 29, further comprising:  
sorting the one or more candidate documents according to the calculate scores.
31. The method of claim 29, further comprising:  
presenting a subscore for each search term having a format criterion.
32. The method of claim 26, wherein the search expression includes one or more search terms having one or more weight criteria selected from a location of the one or more search terms and a frequency count of the one or more search terms.
33. The method of claim 32, wherein the one or more weight criteria require that the one or more search terms are located in a section selected from a header section, a caption section, an abstract section, a footnote section, a summary section, and a title section.
34. The method of claim 32, wherein the one or more weight criteria require that a search term be present in the candidate document at least a minimum number of times.
35. A method for searching electronic documents, comprising:  
receiving a search expression including one or more search terms;  
finding a plurality of candidate documents based on the search expression;  
calculating a format score for each candidate document, wherein the format scores reflect formatting attributes of the one or more search terms; and  
sorting the candidate documents to produce a list having a document order at least partially reflecting the calculated format scores.
36. The method of claim 35, wherein the formatting attributes require that the one or more search terms have a different format than a common format of a paragraph containing the one or more search terms.

37. The method of claim 35, wherein the formatting attributes are selected from the group consisting of a font type, a font size, a font color, a background color, a bold type style, and an italic type style.

38. The method of claim 35, wherein the formatting attributes include a location of the one or more search terms within the candidate document.

39. The method of claim 35, wherein the formatting attributes include whether the one or more search terms are located in a section selected from the group consisting of a header section, a caption section, an abstract section, a footnote section, a summary section, and a title section.

40. The method of claim 35, wherein the document order at least partially reflects a frequency count of the one or more search terms within the candidate document.